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A/CN.10/1993/WG.II/WP.3
6 May 1993

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

DISARMAMENT COMMISSION
1993 substantive session
Working Group II
Item 5

Guidelines and Recommendations for Regional Approaches to Disarmament within the Context of Global Security*

I. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN REGIONAL DISARMAMENT, ARMS LIMITATION AND GLOBAL SECURITY

1. Regional and global approaches to disarmament and arms limitation complement each other and both should be pursued simultaneously in order to promote regional and international peace and security.

2. The regional approach to disarmament and arms limitation is one of the essential elements in global efforts to strengthen international peace and security.

3. Effective measures for disarmament and arms limitation at the global level, particularly in the field of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, as well as in the field of conventional weapons, have a positive impact on regional disarmament and arms limitation efforts.

4. Regional measures on disarmament and arms limitation should take into account the relationship between security in the region and international security as a whole, bearing in mind that the scope and extent of such measures could be affected by extraregional factors.

5. Regional and interregional agreements on disarmament and arms limitation should enhance global security.

6. Global agreements on disarmament and arms limitation should enhance regional security.

7.* Regional measures on disarmament and arms limitation contribute to the achievement of goals and principles for disarmament at the global level as agreed in various documents, including the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly.

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* Indicates Chairman's text.

II. PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES

8. Any regional arrangement for disarmament and arms limitation should be in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

9. Any regional approach to disarmament and arms limitation should be based on the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of States, which includes not only armed intervention but also other forms of interference.

10. Regional disarmament efforts should be pursued in a fair, reasonable, comprehensive and balanced manner.

11. The States participating in regional arrangements for disarmament and arms limitation should define, as appropriate, the region to which the arrangements among them apply.

12. Regional arrangements for disarmament and arms limitation should be open to the participation of all the States concerned and agreed freely among them on the basis of the principle of the sovereign equality of all States.

13. Any regional approach to disarmament and arms limitation has to take into account the specific conditions and characteristics of the region.

14. Regional approaches to disarmament and arms limitation should take into account the necessity to address broader, non-military factors which may affect security.

15.* Regional arrangements for disarmament and arms limitation may also free resources of participating States for peaceful purposes, in particular, the promotion of economic and social development of States.

16. Regional arrangements for disarmament and arms limitation should have no harmful effects on the security of other States.

17. Regional arrangements for disarmament and arms limitation should give priority to the elimination of the most destabilizing military capabilities and imbalances.

18. Regional approaches to disarmament and arms limitation can interact positively with other initiatives of a region to enhance its security.

19. Regional arrangements for disarmament and arms limitation should contribute to increasing stability in the region at the lowest possible level of armaments and armed forces and on the basis of undiminished security for all the participating States.

20. With regard to nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, the establishment of regional arrangements to prevent proliferation in all its aspects contributes to regional and international peace and security.

21.* Regional arrangements for disarmament and arms limitation seeking to reduce or eliminate nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction would contribute to regional and international peace and security.

22. Regional arrangements for disarmament and arms limitation should address in all its aspects the question of the accumulation of conventional weapons beyond the legitimate self-defence requirements of States.

23. Regional approaches and arrangements should seek to address all aspects of disarmament and arms limitation considered to be necessary by all of the participating States in the region and relevant to the specific security situation of the region concerned, and could use step-by-step approaches whenever appropriate.

24. Regional arrangements for disarmament and arms limitation should be pursued with particular urgency in regions where tensions and the accumulation of armaments are such as to pose serious threats and thus endanger regional and international peace and security.

25. Regional arrangements for disarmament and arms limitation can produce a favourable atmosphere conducive to political settlement of regional disputes or conflicts.

26. The peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and other concrete actions to ease regional tensions and build confidence among the States of the region can create a political environment conducive to promoting agreements on disarmament and arms limitation.

27. Regional approaches to disarmament and arms limitation should promote transparency and openness in military matters in order to build confidence among the States of the region concerned.

28. Regional arrangements for disarmament and arms limitation should contain appropriate verification measures, as agreed upon by the parties concerned, to ensure compliance.

29. Extraregional States should respect regional agreements on disarmament and arms limitation and, where appropriate, consider entering into binding undertakings to complement such regional agreements.

30.* Regional approaches to disarmament and arms limitation should take into account the need to give high priority to eradicating the illicit trade in all kinds of weapons and military equipment, a most disturbing and dangerous phenomenon often associated with terrorism, drug trafficking, organized crime, mercenary and other destabilizing activities.

III. WAYS AND MEANS

Confidence- and security-building measures

31. Appropriate confidence- and security-building measures which foster mutual trust and understanding as well as transparency and openness can defuse tensions and promote friendly relations among States. Furthermore, such measures can facilitate the disarmament and arms limitation process and can improve the prospects for the peaceful settlement of disputes, thus contributing to maintaining and enhancing regional and international peace and security.

32. For confidence- and security-building measures at the regional level, attention is drawn to the "Guidelines for appropriate types of confidence-building measures and for the implementation of such measures on a global or regional level", as adopted by the General Assembly in 1988. Account could also be taken, as appropriate, of the experiences gained through the implementation of measures and guidelines designed for the global level, as adopted by the General Assembly, as well as of measures developed in some regions. An illustrative list of measures and guidelines is attached in the annex.

33. Bearing in mind the need to maintain and develop an integrated approach to international peace and security, regional arrangements aimed at building security and confidence need not be confined to the military field, but could, as appropriate, also extend to the political, economic, social, environmental and cultural fields.

34. Verification of confidence- and security-building measures could be considered and, if felt necessary, should be devised and adopted by the participating States.

35. In addition to regional confidence- and security-building measures, interregional ones could be adopted.

Disarmament and arms limitation agreements

36. Regional disarmament and arms limitation agreements should come from within the region, take into account the specific conditions and characteristics of the region, and be open to all States of the region. Such agreements should lead to the relaxation of tension in the region concerned, and may have a positive bearing outside the region.

37. Regional disarmament and arms limitation agreements should seek to ensure security and stability at the lowest level of armaments and armed forces on the basis of undiminished security of States and eliminate the capability for large-scale offensive action and surprise attacks. States should not seek an armament and military spending level that exceeds their legitimate self-defence requirements.

38. Regional disarmament and arms limitation agreements may include those aimed at eliminating nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and, inter alia, their delivery systems, and should, as appropriate, complement such agreements at the global level.

39. States are encouraged to conclude regional agreements to regulate the acquisition of arms in order to prevent the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of arms, without undermining the legitimate self-defence capability of the States concerned.

40. Regional disarmament and arms limitation agreements should aim at the reduction of armaments and military forces. Forces thus reduced should be demobilized and weapons, equipment and facilities above permitted levels within a region should be disposed of by means of destruction or, where appropriate, conversion. Those weapons and facilities should neither be adapted to other weapons systems nor redeployed in other regions, nor lead to increased arms transfers to other regions.

41. Regional disarmament and arms limitation agreements should seek to include all armed forces, their installations and armaments, including those from non-indigenous forces, without undermining the inherent right of States to individual and collective self-defence.

42. In support of efforts for disarmament and arms limitation, States within and outside the region should exercise effective control over their weapons and military equipment, their arms imports and exports, to prevent them from getting into the hands of individuals or groups engaged in the illicit arms trade.

43. The consensus text of recommendations on conventional disarmament which was adopted by the General Assembly in 1990 should serve as a general guideline for all States in their regional approach to disarmament and arms limitation.

44. Regional disarmament and arms limitation agreements should include appropriate verification measures devised by the parties to such agreements. The 16 principles of verification adopted by the General Assembly in 1988 should be observed by all States in their efforts in implementing regional disarmament and arms limitation agreements.

Zones of peace and zones free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction*

45. The establishment of zones of peace and cooperation in various regions of the world under appropriate conditions, to be clearly defined and determined freely by the States concerned in the zone, taking into account the characteristics of the zone and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and in conformity with international law, can contribute to strengthening the security of States within such zones and to international peace and security as a whole.

46.* The establishment of zones free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned constitutes an important disarmament measure. The process of establishing such zones, where appropriate, should be encouraged to promote non-proliferation and to contribute to the attainment of the ultimate objective of achieving a world entirely free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. In the process of establishing such zones, the characteristics of each region should be taken into account. The States participating in such zones should undertake to comply fully with all the objectives, purposes and principles of the agreements or arrangements establishing the zones, thus ensuring that they are genuinely free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

47.* In order to ensure the effectiveness of the zones of peace and cooperation and zones free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, appropriate steps should be undertaken to assure that extraregional States respect the status of such zones and their commitment thereto, and refrain from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against the States of these zones.

Non-proliferation regime*

48. Universal adherence to the regime of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons would facilitate the process of regional arms limitation and disarmament.*

49. Universal adherence to the conventions banning weapons of mass destruction would also facilitate regional arms limitation and disarmament.*

Consultative and cooperative arrangements

50. The establishment of regional consultative fora on peace, security, cooperation and development may facilitate regional approaches to disarmament and arms limitation.

51. Regional and interregional arrangements for cooperation and exchange of information could be considered. In this context, the knowledge and understanding on the regional level about the most destabilizing weapons and military capabilities could assist in the conclusion of regional agreements on disarmament and arms limitation.

IV. ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS

52. In carrying out its role in the field of disarmament, the United Nations should seek to promote complementarity between regional and global processes of disarmament by establishing effective liaison and cooperation with relevant regional bodies. The United Nations can contribute to the regional disarmament and arms limitation process, inter alia, by:

Facilitating regional disarmament efforts in cooperation with other appropriate United Nations bodies and international organizations;

Collecting and disseminating information on disarmament and arms limitation, including the experience of the United Nations in carrying out activities related to the maintenance of international peace and security;

Promoting greater openness in military matters through the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the United Nations standardized system of reporting on military expenditures;

Facilitating the functions of the existing United Nations Regional Centres;

Serving as a source of expertise in disarmament and arms limitation;

Organizing and, where appropriate, coordinating conferences on regional disarmament issues, including confidence- and security-building measures;

Assisting, where regional arrangements so provide, in verifying compliance.

53. The recommendations on the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament which were adopted by the General Assembly in 1990 should serve as useful guidelines for enhancing the role of the United Nations with respect to regional approaches to disarmament and arms limitation.

Annex

Illustrative List of Confidence- and Security-building Measures

Measures and guidelines as adopted by the General Assembly:

- United Nations standardized system of reporting on military expenditures (1980);

- United Nations Register of Conventional Arms (1991);

- Guidelines and recommendations for objective information on military matters (1992).

Measures developed and implemented in some regions:

- Confidence- and security-building measures in the political, economic, social, environmental and cultural fields;

- Exchange of information on armed forces and military activities;

- Dissemination of militarily relevant information, for example, on arms transfers and military budgets;

- Inspections, observations and visits of military facilities and activities, including overflight regimes;

- Regional seminars on security-related issues, such as military doctrines, confidence- and security-building measures, illegal arms traffic, transfers of conventional arms;

- Establishment of effective communications between military and political authorities of different States;

- Establishment of regional security institutions charged with a variety of tasks affecting the security of States in a region, such as conflict prevention, arms control, elimination of illegal arms traffic.